

Congressman Jesse Jackson, Jr., today said, "Between now and November, no matter what the Bush Administration *says*, the American people should *hear* 'mid-term elections.' The President's Houdini act is about to return - escapes and illusions. Illegal immigrants, tax-and-spenders, weak on defense, advocates of gay marriage, Godless politicians - they'll focus on illusion to escape reality. The immigration debate? Escape from the illusion that the economy is working for most Americans. 'Mission Accomplish' in Iraq? Illusion. The only real mission this administration has accomplished is re-election, and that's their *sole goal* for congressional Republicans in November.

"The Bush Administration is trying to escape from the real issues revealing themselves during the immigration debate: a failed economic policy, and the separation of trade policy from human rights. First, tax cuts for the rich on Wall Street and crumbs for workers on Main Street may mean the economy is humming for those on top but those on the bottom - without an increase in the minimum wage in three-quarters of a decade - are hard pressed to meet their basic human and family needs of food, shelter and health care. Second, those who were just for free trade - and not fair trade - continue to disconnect balanced job creation and economic growth, human rights, labor rights and environmental protections to trade agreements. If the general trade policies that gave us NAFTA had succeeded, as we were told they would by the free traders, we would not now be facing the avalanche of undocumented workers flowing across the Mexican border into the United States. The *real answer* to the illegal immigration problem is to create well-paying jobs and raise the living standards in the developing world, not exploit undocumented workers and lower living standards here at home!

"Early indications are that President Bush failed to convince the real target of his speech: hard core conservatives. It's interesting that the same Reagan conservatives who cheered when he told Gorbachev to 'tear down this wall' between East and West Germany, now want to build a wall between the United States and Mexico.

"The speech also raised as many questions as it answered. For example, why call up the National Guard to stop illegal immigrants, when the Guard was not called up with the same sense of urgency to assist Hurricane Katrina victims? Will the 'support' role of the National Guard free up an *armed* Border Patrol to stop illegal entry *by any means necessary*? What are the rules of engagement? Is illegal immigration a reason to take *any* life? My view is that no one simply trying to secure a job to feed their family - even someone entering the country illegally - should be shot and killed," Jackson concluded.